



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WESTERN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

TOWSON, MD (July 17, 2006)---Western Correctional Institution, one of the state's largest prisons, turns ten years old this month. WCI began accepting inmates in mid-July 1996, and today has an inmate population of nearly 1,900.

Built on the site of the long-abandoned Celanese plant, WCI represented both a forward-thinking capital construction plan and a successful partnership with community leaders. "WCI is a triumph of cooperation all the way around," says Mary Ann Saar, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). "The community welcomed us and we are very grateful for their continued support."

"The place looks even better today than the day it opened," says David Bezanson, DPSCS' Assistant Secretary for property services, capital construction and facilities maintenance. Mr. Bezanson oversaw the planning and construction of both WCI and neighboring North Branch Correctional Institution.

"Many people don't realize the tremendous challenges we faced---and overcame--- for that project," says Mr. Bezanson. The old manufacturing property on which WCI was built had major environmental issues; the sprawling prison needed its own water tower; there were wastewater issues. Busy railroad tracks with a highway crossing ran through the property, and Warrior Run and the nearby North Branch of the Potomac created a host of environmental challenges of their own.

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Today, WCI provides just the economic impact that its community supporters had envisioned. The prison has approximately 500 employees, and is a major economic engine for Allegany County, as well as a major job provider for Allegany and Garrett counties in Maryland, Mineral County, WV, and nearby areas of Pennsylvania.

"The workforce we have is outstanding," says Frank C. Sizer, Jr., Maryland's Commissioner of Correction and WCI's first warden. "And because so many folks here have a stake in the prison, we always tried to involve the community as much as possible."

Under the leadership of Warden Jon Galley and Assistant Warden Dr. Harry Murphy, WCI is a well-run institution which features many programs designed to do more than lock people up. "People who don't think treatment, education, job skill training, and anger management classes are important don't see the big picture," says Warden Galley. "And the big picture is that 95% of these inmates are coming out one day. They have to come out, so they better be able to stay clean and not commit new crimes." Warden Galley also notes that idle time is a danger to his staff. "And nothing's more important than the safety of my staff and the public."

WCI Background Information

<i>Opened:</i>	<i>July 1996</i>
<i>Staff:</i>	<i>Approximately 500</i>
<i>Inmates:</i>	<i>1,887</i>
<i>Security level:</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<i>Warden:</i>	<i>Jon Galley</i>

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